



Developmental Services Worker Program Standard

The approved program standard for the Developmental Services Worker program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 51641) and Diploma in Developmental Services Worker delivered by Career Colleges (CCs)¹.

Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security
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¹ Although the standard is the same, it may be referred to as a Program Standard by the CAATs and a Training Standard by the CCs. The name of the credential issued will vary depending on the education provider (e.g., Ontario College Diploma for the CAATs and Diploma in Developmental Services Worker for the CCs).

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Contents

Introduction	1
Development of system-wide program standards	1
Program standards	1
The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes	2
The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes	2
The development of a program standard	2
Updating the program standard	3
Vocational standard	4
Preamble	4
The vocational learning outcomes	7
Glossary	18
Essential employability skills	21
Context	21
Skill categories	21
Application and implementation	21
General education requirement	25
Requirement	25
Purpose	25
Themes	25

Introduction

This document is the Program Standard for the Developmental Services Worker program of instruction leading to an Ontario College Diploma delivered by Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (MTCU funding code 51641) and Diploma in Developmental Services Worker delivered by Career Colleges (CCs).

Development of system-wide program standards

In 1993, the Government of Ontario initiated program standards development with the objectives of bringing a greater degree of consistency to college programming offered across the province, broadening the focus of college programs to ensure graduates have the skills to be flexible and to continue to learn and adapt, and providing public accountability for the quality and relevance of college programs.

The Program Standards Unit of the Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security has responsibility for the development, review and approval of system-wide standards for programs of instruction at Ontario Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Career Colleges.

Program standards

Program standards apply to all similar programs of instruction offered by Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Career Colleges across the province of Ontario. Each program standard for a postsecondary program includes the following elements:

- [Vocational standard](#) (the vocationally specific learning outcomes which apply to the program of instruction in question),
- [Essential employability skills](#) (the essential employability skills learning outcomes which apply to all programs of instruction); and
- [General education requirement](#) (the requirement for general education in postsecondary programs of instruction).

Collectively, these elements outline the essential skills and knowledge that a student must reliably demonstrate in order to graduate from the program.

Individual Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology and Career Colleges offering the program of instruction determine the specific program structure, delivery methods and other curriculum matters to be used in assisting students to achieve the outcomes articulated in the standard. Individual colleges also determine whether additional local learning outcomes will be required to reflect specific local needs and/or interests.

The expression of program standards as vocational learning outcomes

Vocational learning outcomes represent culminating demonstrations of learning and achievement. They are not simply a listing of discrete skills, nor broad statements of knowledge and comprehension. In addition, vocational learning outcomes are interrelated and cannot be viewed in isolation from one another. As such, they should be viewed as a comprehensive whole. They describe performances that demonstrate that significant integrated learning by graduates of the program has been achieved and verified.

Expressing standards as vocational learning outcomes ensures consistency in the outcomes for program graduates, while leaving to the discretion of individual colleges, curriculum matters such as the specific program structure and delivery methods.

The presentation of the vocational learning outcomes

The **vocational learning outcome** statements set out the culminating demonstration of learning and achievement that the student must reliably demonstrate before graduation.

The **elements of the performance** for each outcome define and clarify the level and quality of performance necessary to meet the requirements of the vocational learning outcome. However, it is the performance of the vocational learning outcome itself on which students are evaluated. The elements of performance are indicators of the means by which the student may proceed to satisfactory performance of the vocational learning outcome. The elements of performance do not stand alone but rather in reference to the vocational learning outcome of which they form a part.

The development of a program standard

In establishing the standards development initiative, the Government of Ontario determined that all postsecondary programs of instruction should include vocational skills coupled with a broader set of essential skills. This combination is considered critical to ensuring that college graduates have the skills required to be successful both upon graduation from the college program and throughout their working and personal lives.

A program standard is developed through a broad consultation process involving a range of stakeholders with a direct interest in the program area, including employers, professional associations, universities, secondary schools and program graduates working in the field, in addition to students, faculty and administrators at the colleges themselves. It represents a consensus of participating stakeholders on the essential learning that all program graduates should have achieved.

Updating the program standard

The Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security will undertake regular reviews of the vocational learning outcomes for this program to ensure that the Developmental Services Worker Program Standard remains appropriate and relevant to the needs of students and employers across the Province of Ontario. To confirm that this document is the most up-to-date release, please contact the [Ministry of Colleges, Universities, Research Excellence and Security](#).

Vocational standard

All graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program have achieved the [eight vocational learning outcomes \(VLOs\)](#), in addition to achieving the essential employability outcomes and meeting the general education (GE) requirement.

Preamble

Graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program are prepared to assist people with developmental disabilities, their families, and support network, making a positive impact in their lives and communities. Trained to provide **person-directed** supports and services that are ethical, professional, respectful, and compliant with relevant legislation, regulations, and standards, graduates help foster safe environments, reduce risk, and uphold the dignity and rights of people living with developmental disabilities.

The program provides graduates with a strong foundation in the knowledge, skills, and ethical principles necessary to support individuals in various areas, including personal care, life skills development, healthcare, behavioural and social support, employment, advocacy, and inclusion. They learn evidence-based strategies to teach skills tailored to individual learning needs and preferences and communicate through diverse methods. Additionally, graduates are equipped to support people with a variety of needs including **dual diagnosis** and behaviours that are challenging and complex focusing on holistic well-being throughout the lifespan.

With a commitment to **self-determination**, independence and empowerment, graduates encourage individual decision making, growth, and potential, adapting their approaches to meet the unique needs of each **service user**. The program also emphasizes the importance of advocacy and collaboration with interdisciplinary professionals, community partners, and people with developmental disabilities and to help build inclusive communities that respect cultural differences, challenge systemic barriers, and uphold the values and beliefs of those served.

Students also develop strategies to enhance job performance, engage in lifelong learning, sustain career success, and practice holistic self-care. They learn to integrate workplace technology, assistive devices, digital tools, and emerging technologies to improve productivity, communication, and the independence of **service users**.

Graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program may seek employment at developmental services agencies which offer accommodation, community participation, employment support and recreation/leisure support services; as educational assistants by boards of education; or they may be self-employed, contracting directly with people

with developmental disabilities, their families and/or support networks. Other potential career paths include positions in childcare, long-term care, post-secondary education, advocacy, community organizations, or acquired brain injury services. They may also choose to further their education by pursuing a graduate certificate or degree.

[See Glossary](#)

Note: The [Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer](#) (ONCAT) maintains the provincial postsecondary credit transfer portal, [ONTransfer](#).

Synopsis of the vocational learning outcomes Developmental Services Worker (Ontario College Diploma)

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. conduct oneself in a professional and ethical manner to enhance service delivery and respect for others.
2. provide **person-directed** supports to people with developmental disabilities to foster their independence, decision-making abilities, inclusion in the community, and overall fulfilment.
3. comply with current legislation, standards, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures to help create safe environments and mitigate risk.
4. support the health and well-being of people with developmental disabilities including those with **dual diagnosis** and complex needs to promote a meaningful life experience across the lifespan.
5. use and adapt a variety of evidence-based teaching and learning strategies that support the individual's growth and potential.
6. advocate and collaborate with interdisciplinary professionals, community partners and **service users** to address systemic barriers and develop inclusive communities that respect the culture, values, beliefs and language of people with developmental disabilities.
7. plan strategies for ongoing personal and professional development to improve job performance, sustainability, and holistic self-care.
8. use workplace technology and assistive devices to boost productivity, improve communication, and promote the independence of people with developmental disabilities.

[See Glossary](#)

Note: The learning outcomes have been numbered as a point of reference; numbering does not imply prioritization, sequencing, nor weighting of significance.

The vocational learning outcomes

1. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: conduct oneself in a professional and ethical manner to enhance service delivery and respect for others.

Elements of the performance

- a. Develop professional rapport with people with developmental disabilities, their families, and others while maintaining confidentiality and respecting boundaries.
- b. Work within the scope of practice adhering to the professional values and ethics of the **Developmental Services Worker Code of Ethics** and **Standards of Practice**.
- c. Collaborate as part of interprofessional teams using oral, written, nonverbal and interpersonal communication skills which meet the specific requirements of the person with developmental disabilities and the sector.
- d. Work in accordance with the mission, visions, values, goals, policies, and procedures of the workplace.
- e. Adapt to the needs and preferences of **service users** with respect for individual choices and decisions.
- f. Cultivate and maintain an environment of zero-tolerance towards all forms of abuse and report all alleged, suspected, disclosed or witnessed incidents of abuse of a person with a developmental disability in accordance with legislation, and workplace policies and procedures.
- g. Determine the impact of one's own values, biases, attitudes, and needs on provision of support and the workplace.
- h. Explain power imbalances and mitigation strategies between developmental support providers and those they assist.
- i. Discuss the implications and impacts of self-employment including legal responsibilities, collecting fees, and providing services.
- j. Use a variety of evidence-based and/or recognized and recommended practices with an emphasis on outcomes and continuous improvement to increase trust, confidence, and conduct work ethically.
- k. Summarize government commitments for a variety of groups including Indigenous **service users**, health care access, and equity.
- l. Discuss strategies for managing disagreements and conflict in a variety of work-related situations (including with co-workers, performance management, etc.).

[See Glossary](#)

2. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: provide **person-directed** supports to people with developmental disabilities to foster their independence, decision-making abilities, inclusion in the community, and overall fulfilment.

Elements of the performance

- a. Use a respectful and holistic, **person-directed** approach when supporting, planning and implementing services with people with developmental disabilities and their networks.
- b. Maintain the rights and responsibilities of people with developmental disabilities by placing them as the priority in the planning process and providing opportunities to make decisions and live as independently as possible through **person-directed**, equitable and sustainable supports.
- c. Use a variety of evidence-based models and tools to assist with **person-directed** plans.
- d. Gather information about a person's social, vocational, cultural, intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical goals to develop **person-directed** supports.
- e. Provide opportunities for people with a developmental disability to participate in a variety of experiences with consideration of their faith, culture and language.
- f. Collaborate with people with developmental disabilities and their families, significant others, social networks, and interprofessional team members to facilitate informed decision making and develop **person-directed** supports.
- g. Identify and help coordinate resources, **natural supports**, community services and activities when implementing **person-directed** supports as part of a **person-centred system**.
- h. Determine potential barriers to the achievement of personal goals for people with developmental disabilities and work to minimize or overcome them.
- i. Advocate with and on behalf of people with developmental disabilities to foster **self-determination** and inclusion.
- j. Use a variety of strategies to help the person with a developmental disability to build, support, and maintain reciprocal relationships.
- k. Provide communication, guidance and/or advice with respect for equity, diversity and inclusion.
- l. Explore ways to work with families as an integral part of a support team incorporating family dynamics, **systems theory** and the multiple roles that parents play in the lives of their children with developmental disabilities.

[See Glossary](#)

3. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: comply with current legislation, standards, regulations, policies, practices, and procedures to help create safe environments and mitigate risk.

Elements of the performance

- a. Conduct all work in accordance with current standards and policies, including but not limited to federal and provincial legislation, local regulations, health and safety guidelines, and workplace procedures.
- b. Assist in the creation and maintenance of safe/safer physical and **psychosocial environments** while supporting **self-determination, dignity of risk, and informed risk taking**.
- c. Recognize and report situations of abuse, including human trafficking and domestic violence, in accordance with legislation, and workplace policies and procedures.
- d. Initiate and implement harm reduction approaches and prevention strategies including conducting regular environmental safety scans to identify a variety of risk factors.
- e. Work with team members to identify the immediate and long-term impact of abuse or neglect, develop a support plan, and provide **trauma-informed** support that addresses the impact of abuse and systemic oppression.
- f. Take preventive measures and respond to accidents, emergencies and serious occurrences for the health and safety of oneself, people with developmental disabilities, and others.
- g. Respond immediately, responsibly, and professionally during escalating and crisis situations, according to the **person-directed** plan and workplace protocols, using de-escalation strategies and seeking additional assistance if required.
- h. Report and document all accidents, emergencies and serious occurrences for immediate resolution, record-keeping, and future reference.
- i. Check equipment (e.g. health, safety, and assistive devices) prior to use and according to regular maintenance schedules to ensure it is in good working order.
- j. Use all equipment safely and according to manufacturer specifications for the protection of self and others.
- k. Perform safe lifting and transporting procedures using appropriate techniques/equipment such as lifts, wheelchairs, assistive devices, and vehicles.
- l. Instruct and assist those with developmental disabilities to maintain personal wellness and security in a variety of situations (e.g. fire safety procedures).
- m. Explain the purpose and effects of medications and safely and ethically administer them within the scope of practice as a non-regulated health care provider using knowledge-based assessment of the health status of people with developmental disabilities.

- n. Store and/or dispose of medication and medical devices/materials safely and hazardous materials sustainably in accordance with legislation, and workplace policies and procedures.
- o. Observe, monitor, document and report the effects of prescription and non-prescription medications regarding their benefits, adverse side effects, or toxicity and implement appropriate measures as directed.

[See Glossary](#)

4. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: support the health and well-being of people with developmental disabilities including those with **dual diagnosis** and complex needs to promote a meaningful life experience across the lifespan.

Elements of the performance

- a. Respect the rights, dignity, privacy and autonomy of the person including obtaining consent while providing health support.
- b. Consult and collaborate with healthcare and allied professionals as part of an interprofessional team to develop care plans and coordinate access to health services and support.
- c. Advocate for access to health supports and resources with families, caregivers and interprofessional teams.
- d. Monitor, document and report changes in mental and physical health, and initiate appropriate action.
- e. Explain the structure, functions, and interdependency of body systems and common health conditions associated with developmental disabilities to promote health and well-being.
- f. Provide personal care, hygiene, and basic physical health care using a respectful and holistic **person-directed** approach, (e.g. assessing vital signs, changing simple dressings, toileting, bathing, **enteral nutrition**, applying prescribed thermal treatments).
- g. Support people with developmental disabilities to participate in a healthy, active and balance lifestyle that aligns with their preferences and goals (e.g. nutrition, exercise, social activities, and access to relevant community health services).
- h. Apply knowledge of **biopsychosocial** and spiritual factors to promote the health and well-being of people with developmental disabilities across the lifespan.
- i. Adapt and provide a continuum of support to people with developmental disabilities as they age (e.g. dementia education, palliative care, senior services, right to die at home, etc.).
- j. Support people dealing with bereavement and **non-bereavement loss** using appropriate, **trauma-informed**, empathetic, and **culturally competent** support techniques.
- k. Plan and prepare balanced meals in accordance with standard nutritional guidelines, safe food handling practices, culture, and/or personal preferences and/or as prescribed by a registered health professional.
- l. Assess the ability of people with developmental disabilities to safely self-administer medication using various routes, and with them implement an appropriate individual teaching plan.

- m. Explain the causes, features, and effects of different developmental disabilities, related health problems, and mental health issues.
- n. Identify the factors that contribute to **dual diagnosis**, addiction, and complex and challenging behaviours.
- o. Participate in **functional behavioural assessment** and the development and implementation of behavioural support plans.
- p. Collaborate with an interprofessional team and **service users** to proactively and responsively develop and implement an individualized positive behavioural support plan.
- q. Document, evaluate, review and report status of the positive behavioural support plan and make adjustments as required.
- r. Support people to learn and utilize effective coping and emotion regulation strategies.
- s. Teach and provide support with daily living activities (e.g. laundry, cooking, cleaning, transportation, etc.).
- t. Support people in planning for and navigating through key life transitions (e.g., youth to adulthood, aging, employment, etc.).
- u. Integrate **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)** into routine operations to prevent transmission of infectious diseases.

[See Glossary](#)

5. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: use and adapt a variety of evidence-based teaching and learning strategies that support the individual's growth and potential.

Elements of the performance

- a. Individual learning needs and preferences of people with developmental disabilities.
- b. Use a variety of formal and informal teaching strategies, techniques and perspectives targeted to diverse backgrounds, ages, strengths, needs and learning preferences.
- c. Foster optimal formal and informal learning environments by considering physiological, psychological, and environmental factors affecting learning, conducting ongoing evaluation and revising the teaching plan as needed in collaboration with the individual and/or their network.
- d. Use a **person-directed** approach to establish teaching priorities.
- e. Use a variety of approaches (e.g. evidence-based, Indigenous knowledge, and positive learning, teaching, coaching and assessment strategies) to facilitate skill development and autonomy.
- f. Compile relevant information from a variety of sources and community resources to connect people with flexible and innovative planning and teaching options.
- g. Teach human sexuality including healthy relationships, abuse prevention, consent, birth control and other reproductive rights.
- h. Encourage active **citizenship** and self-advocacy skills (e.g. public meetings, speaking out against hatred, injustice and inequality, abiding by laws, voting, etc.), emphasizing rights and responsibilities.
- i. Teach functional and social skills to people with developmental disabilities.
- j. Teach employability skills to people with developmental disabilities.
- k. Support individuals in developing a diverse range of digital communication skills and the safe and appropriate use of electronic equipment and technology (including online and social media) to help them increase independence and community participation.
- l. Promote strategies for problem-solving, conflict management and coping skills.
- m. Use creative/artistic activities to explore and encourage self-expression, skill development, and as a potential employment path or source of income.
- n. Explain how behavioural expectations can change throughout the lifespan (e.g. actions as children or with minors may not be appropriate later on), and promote specific behaviours that align with broader societal expectations.
- o. Explore alternative educational pathways (e.g., apprenticeships, internships, college Community Integration through Co-operative Education programs, etc.) to expand learning and employment prospects.

[See Glossary](#)

6. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: advocate and collaborate with interdisciplinary professionals, community partners and **service users** to address systemic barriers and develop inclusive communities that respect the culture, values, beliefs and language of people with developmental disabilities.

Elements of the performance

- a. Identify the history and evolution of the field of developmental disabilities in Ontario including human rights and historical context of systemic discrimination and the impact on current service delivery.
- b. Compare and contrast the Ontario model of services for people with developmental disabilities with other service models to identify best practices.
- c. Describe how **marginalization and intersectionality** impact the provision of support for people with developmental disabilities.
- d. Employ strategies including developing and maintaining partnerships to create opportunities for inclusion and participation of people in all aspects of the community including housing, social environments, recreation, employment, education, health care, etc.
- e. Foster full **citizenship** for people with developmental disabilities including educating them on political, civil and social rights, free from bias or influence and respecting independent decisions.
- f. Cultivate and practice **cultural competence, cultural safety, and cultural humility** in all professional contexts.
- g. Create opportunities for community building and connect people to networks of support that fit with their culture, values, beliefs and language.
- h. Use a variety of strategies to support people with developmental disabilities to build and maintain reciprocal relationships (e.g. family, friends, community members, caregivers, etc.).
- i. Identify barriers that hinder inclusion and advocate for the development of inclusive policies and practices for people with developmental disabilities and their families.
- j. Model behaviour and attitudes that promote **social justice** and support social change.
- k. Facilitate active participation in community groups, activities, and events to foster belonging and well-being for people with developmental disabilities in accordance with their **person-directed** plan and preferences.
- l. Develop and apply professional communication and interpersonal skills to actively create and sustain inclusive communities, ensuring equal access, accommodations, and participation for people with developmental disabilities.

m. Employ practical strategies for including and supporting people with developmental disabilities in the workforce, volunteering, self-employment, and other related opportunities.

[See Glossary](#)

7. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: plan strategies for ongoing personal and professional development to improve job performance, sustainability, and holistic self-care.

Elements of the performance

- a. Explain the importance of regular self-reflection, critical thinking, and professional development in maintaining effective and up-to-date practice throughout one's career.
- b. Discuss the **Developmental Services Human Resource (DS HR) Strategy Core Competencies** and its importance to employment in the field.
- c. Apply **DS HR Core Competencies** in practical workplace situations (e.g. role play, simulation, applied project).
- d. Conduct routine self-assessments of current behavioural competencies, knowledge and technical skills to formulate professional development plans
- e. Develop a professional portfolio that identifies skills and abilities for employment.
- f. Assess and respond professionally to work-related feedback to improve job performance.
- g. Identify the necessary skills and practice requirements for self-employment, independent contracting, and other non-traditional career options when working with individuals with developmental disabilities.
- h. Identify various resources and ways to stay current on practices in the field, enhance professional growth, and develop leadership qualities.
- i. Recognize indicators of one's own stress, fatigue, and illness, including bereavement, **compassion fatigue**, and **vicarious trauma** to maintain personal and professional wellbeing, foster resilience, and avoid burnout.
- j. Discuss how developmental services can contribute to sustainability and environmental responsibility, focusing on minimizing ecological footprints and promoting responsible practices (e.g. modelling and teaching environmentally sound practices; reducing waste by composting, reusing and recycling; review use of toxic chemicals for cleaning, etc.).

[See Glossary](#)

8. The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to: use workplace technology and assistive devices to boost productivity, improve communication, and promote the independence of people with developmental disabilities.

Elements of the performance

- a. Communicate using electronic, written, verbal and non-verbal formats and accessibility design features to meet the requirements and preferences of the person with developmental disabilities and the sector.
- b. Explain and demonstrate how technology can enhance face-to-face communication.
- c. Use common workplace technology and computer software for electronic documentation, organization, and record keeping.
- d. Identify potential safety, cybersecurity, and privacy concerns for use of technology by self and others and develop skills and strategies to mitigate these risks.
- e. Identify and use a variety of communication strategies including face-to-face, augmentative and alternative (e.g. computers, mobile and speech-generating devices) to share messages and information with **service users** and strengthen connection.
- f. Reinforce functional literacy in people with developmental disabilities through the use of technology to listen to text online including learning to listen to information and using various tools (e.g. apps, website accessibility features).
- g. Assist with the basic set up and use of **smart home technology** to enhance the independence, safety, and personal care of people with developmental disabilities (e.g. setting reminders, monitoring health, home comfort and device assistance, automated routines, etc.).
- h. Discuss ethical concerns around artificial intelligence and technology including appropriate use, protecting personal health information, and safeguarding privacy and confidentiality.
- i. Use assistive technologies to create opportunities and support inclusion in various areas such as education, employment, and recreation.

[See Glossary](#)

Glossary

Biopsychosocial - A model that is a framework that recognizes the interconnectedness of biological, psychological, and social factors in understanding health and illness.

Citizenship - Signifies the right to be treated with respect and to participate fully in society. It is a legal status that grants individuals the rights and responsibilities of being a Canadian citizen, including the right to reside in the country, participate in the democratic process, and enjoy the benefits of society.

Compassion fatigue – A condition in which caregivers and support providers experience emotional exhaustion or a decrease in compassion over time due to repeated exposure to stress. It is the cost of caring for others or for their emotional pain, resulting from the desire to help relieve the suffering of others.

Core competencies - Fundamental qualifications consisting of specific skills, knowledge, behaviour and attributes that are key to successful performance in a role. The Developmental Services Human Resources Strategy, in conjunction with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, developed Core Competencies specific to the developmental services system in Ontario.

Cultural competence/culturally competent, cultural safety, and cultural humility - Distinct but related concepts in healthcare and other service settings.

Cultural competence - The ability to understand, appreciate, interact and provide care effectively with people from diverse backgrounds, valuing diversity and adapting to differences.

Cultural safety - An outcome-oriented concept where the service provider's actions and interactions are safe and accessible for individuals from diverse cultures, particularly those who have experienced marginalization or discrimination. It requires recognizing and addressing power imbalances and reflecting on one's own cultural values and how they influence the care one provides, to create an environment of respect.

Cultural humility - Emphasizes ongoing self-reflection and self-critique combined with a willingness to learn from others about their cultural identity and experiences.

Developmental Services Worker Code of Ethics (PDF) - A written set of guidelines that describe the primary values and ethical standards that guide the actions of Developmental Services Workers.

Dignity of risk - The right of individuals to make choices, take risks, and learn from them.

Dual diagnosis - The co-existence of a developmental disability and mental illness (which may be diagnosed or undiagnosed). Outside of Ontario the term can be used to

describe concurrent disorder (e.g. the co-occurrence of substance use and mental illness).

Enteral nutrition - A method of delivering nutrients directly into the digestive system, using the gastrointestinal (GI) tract. Commonly referred to as tube feeding via the nose or directly into the stomach or intestines.

Functional behavioural assessment - A process that identifies specific behaviours and the underlying factors that reinforce them, with the goal of creating an intervention plan to promote more positive behaviours.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) - Evidence-based practices and procedures that, when applied consistently can prevent or reduce the risk of transmission of microorganisms.

Informed risk taking - Making decisions about potentially risky activities or ventures after thoroughly considering and understanding the potential benefits, risks, and possible consequences.

Intersectionality - A way of understanding how multiple social factors overlap to shape people's lives. It's a tool for analyzing how systems of oppression (e.g. racism, sexism, ableism, classism, etc.) interact and create unique experiences of privilege or oppression.

Marginalization - Treating someone as if they are not important, pushed to the margins, and excluding them from meaningful inclusion and access to resources and opportunities.

Natural supports - Supportive relationships that people have in their everyday lives that are normally unpaid (e.g. family, friends, peers, co-workers, and others in the community).

Non-bereavement loss - Can include a range of reactions to significant negative life events such as the onset of chronic illness, dementia, the departure of a roommate, stoppage of important activities, loss of employment, etc.

Person-centred system - The person is the focus of services, and their needs and preferences are reflected in how the system is designed.

Person-directed - A person is in charge of making important decisions for themselves, based on what they want for their life. People can get help to make decisions for themselves if desired.

Psychosocial environments - Social and psychological factors that influence an individual's well-being and behaviour and response to stressors; the relationship between an individual and their surrounding environment, including social relationships,

workplace dynamics, and cultural influences.

Self-determination - The right to decide one's own course of action without coercion; also known as free will.

Service user(s) - A broader term used in this document to include those directly using and benefitting from developmental services and support including, but not limited to, people with developmental disabilities and their close contacts (i.e. families, guardians, spouses/partners, etc.).

Smart home technology - Refers to the integration of internet-connected devices and systems within a home or location that allow for remote control and automation of various functions. Can include lighting, heating, security, entertainment, and appliances, all of which can be controlled through smartphones, voice assistants, or centralized hubs to enhance convenience, efficiency, and security.

Social justice - Ensuring fairness for all members of society, including equitable distribution of benefits, responsibilities, and the consequences of societal structures.

[Standards of practice](#) (PDF) - Guidelines that outline the minimum level of professional and ethical conduct, competency, and performance expected of individuals in a specific profession, ensuring public protection and guiding professional behaviour. The Developmental Services Professional (DSP) Standards of Practice describe the values, priorities, and practices of staff in the developmental services sector to guide execution of daily duties and promote excellence.

Systems theory - A framework that views individuals as part of interconnected systems like families, communities, and societies. It emphasizes understanding how different parts of a system interact to impact an individual's life, behaviour and challenges rather than focusing solely on the individual themselves.

Trauma-informed - A way of thinking and working with people that considers the impact of trauma, seeks to prevent re-traumatization, and promotes healing.

[Vicarious trauma](#) - The process of emotional and psychological change that occurs in individuals who are exposed to the trauma of others, often as part of their work. It differs from compassion fatigue in that it stems from indirect exposure to graphic or distressing accounts of trauma and often changes a person's worldview, increases cynicism and a sense of danger.

Essential employability skills

All graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program of instruction must have reliably demonstrated the essential employability skills learning outcomes listed below, in addition to achieving the [vocational learning outcomes](#) and meeting the [general education requirement](#).

Context

Essential Employability Skills (EES) are skills that, regardless of a student's program or discipline, are critical for success in the workplace, in day-to-day living and for lifelong learning.

The teaching and attainment of these EES for students in, and graduates from, Ontario's Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology are anchored in a set of three fundamental assumptions:

- these skills are important for every adult to function successfully in society today
- our colleges are well equipped and well positioned to prepare graduates with these skills
- these skills are equally valuable for all graduates, regardless of the level of their credential, whether they pursue a career path, or they pursue further education

Skill categories

To capture these skills, the following six categories define the essential areas where graduates must demonstrate skills and knowledge.

- Communication
- Numeracy
- Critical Thinking & Problem Solving
- Information Management
- Interpersonal
- Personal

Application and implementation

In each of the six skill categories, there are a number of defining skills, or sub skills, identified to further articulate the requisite skills identified in the main skill categories. The following chart illustrates the relationship between the skill categories, the defining skills within the categories and learning outcomes to be achieved by graduates from all postsecondary programs of instruction that lead to an Ontario College credential.

EES may be embedded in General Education or vocational courses or developed

through discrete courses. However, these skills are developed, all graduates with Ontario College credentials must be able to reliably demonstrate the essential skills required in each of the six categories.

Skill category: communication

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening
- presenting
- visual literacy

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. communicate clearly, concisely and correctly in the written, spoken and visual form that fulfills the purpose and meets the needs of the audience.
2. respond to written, spoken or visual messages in a manner that ensures effective communication.

Skill category: numeracy

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- understanding and applying mathematical concepts and reasoning
- analyzing and using numerical data
- conceptualizing

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. execute mathematical operations accurately

Skill category: critical thinking and problem solving

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- analyzing
- synthesizing
- evaluating
- decision making
- creative and innovative thinking

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. apply a systematic approach to solve problems.
2. use a variety of thinking skills to anticipate and solve problems.

Skill category: information management

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- Gathering and managing information
- Selecting and using appropriate tools and technology for a task or a project
- Computer literacy
- Internet skills

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. locate, select, organize and document information using appropriate technology and information systems.
2. analyze, evaluate and apply relevant information from a variety of sources.

Skill category: interpersonal

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- Teamwork
- Relationship management
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership
- Networking

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. show respect for the diverse opinions, values, belief systems and contributions of others.
2. interact with others in groups or teams in ways that contribute to effective working relationships and the achievement of goals.

Skill category: personal

Defining skills

Skill areas to be demonstrated by graduates:

- Managing self
- Managing change and being flexible and adaptable
- Engaging in reflective practices
- Demonstrating personal responsibility

Learning outcomes

The graduate has reliably demonstrated the ability to:

1. manage the use of time and other resources to complete projects.
2. take responsibility for one's own actions, decisions and their consequences.

General education requirement

All graduates of the Developmental Services Worker program must have met the general education requirement described below, in addition to achieving the [vocational](#) and [essential employability skills](#) learning outcomes.

Requirement

The [General Education Requirement](#) for programs of instruction is stipulated in the [Credentials Framework](#) in the Minister's Binding Policy Directive Framework for Programs of Instruction.

In programs of instruction leading to either an Ontario College Diploma or an Ontario College Advanced Diploma, it is required that graduates have been engaged in learning that exposes them to at least one discipline outside their main field of study and increases their awareness of the society and culture in which they live and work. This will typically be accomplished by students taking 3 to 5 courses (or the equivalent) designed discretely and separately from vocational learning opportunities.

This general education learning would normally be delivered using a combination of required and elective processes.

Purpose

The purpose of General Education in the Ontario college system is to contribute to the development of citizens who are conscious of the diversity, complexity and richness of the human experience; who are able to establish meaning through this consciousness; and who, as a result, are able to contribute thoughtfully, creatively and positively to the society in which they live and work.

General Education strengthens students' essential employability skills, such as critical analysis, problem solving and communication, in the context of an exploration of topics with broad-based personal and/or societal importance.

Themes

The themes listed below will be used to provide direction to Ontario Colleges in the development and identification of courses that are designed to fulfil the General Education Requirement for programs of instructions.

Each theme provides a statement of Rationale and offers suggestions related to more specific topic areas that could be explored within each area. These suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. They are included to provide guidance regarding the nature and scope of content that would be judged as meeting the intent and overall

goals of General Education.

Arts in society:

Rationale:

The capacity of a person to recognize and evaluate artistic and creative achievements is useful in many aspects of his/her life. Since artistic expression is a fundamentally human activity, which both reflects and anticipates developments in the larger culture, its study will enhance the student's cultural and self-awareness.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the importance of visual and creative arts in human affairs, of the artist's and writer's perceptions of the world and the means by which those perceptions are translated into the language of literature and artistic expression. They will also provide an appreciation of the aesthetic values used in examining works of art and possibly, a direct experience in expressing perceptions in an artistic medium.

Civic Life:

Rationale:

In order for individuals to live responsibly and to reach their potential as individuals and as citizens of society, they need to understand the patterns of human relationships that underlie the orderly interactions of a society's various structural units. Informed people will have knowledge of the meaning of civic life in relation to diverse communities at the local, national and global level and an awareness of international issues and the effects of these on Canada, as well as Canada's place in the international community.

Content:

Courses in this area should provide students with an understanding of the meaning of freedoms, rights and participation in community and public life, in addition to a working knowledge of the structure and function of various levels of government (municipal, provincial, national) in a Canadian and/or in an international context. They may also provide an historical understanding of major political issues affecting relations between the various levels of government in Canada and their constituents.

Social and cultural understanding:

Rationale:

Knowledge of the patterns and precedents of the past provide the means for a person

to gain an awareness of his or her place in contemporary culture and society. In addition to this awareness, students will acquire a sense of the main currents of their culture and that of other cultures over an extended period of time in order to link personal history to the broader study of culture.

Content:

Courses in this area are those that deal broadly with major social and cultural themes. These courses may also stress the nature and validity of historical evidence and the variety of historical interpretation of events. Courses will provide the students with a view and understanding of the impact of cultural, social, ethnic or linguistic characteristics.

Personal understanding:

Rationale:

Educated people are equipped for life-long understanding and development of themselves as integrated physiological and psychological entities. They are aware of the ideal need to be fully functioning persons: mentally, physically, emotionally, socially, spiritually and vocationally.

Content:

Courses in this area will focus on understanding the individual: his or her evolution; situation; relationship with others; place in the environment and universe; achievements and problems; and his or her meaning and purpose. They will also allow students the opportunity to study institutionalized human social behaviour in a systematic way. Courses fulfilling this requirement may be oriented to the study of the individual within a variety of contexts.

Science and technology:

Rationale:

Matter and energy are universal concepts in science, forming a basis for understanding the interactions that occur in living and non-living systems in our universe. Study in this area provides an understanding of the behaviour of matter that provides a foundation for further scientific study and the creation of broader understanding about natural phenomena.

Similarly, the various applications and developments in the area of technology have an increasing impact on all aspects of human endeavour and have numerous social, economic and philosophical implications. For example, the operation of computers to process data at high speed has invoked an interaction between machines and the

human mind that is unique in human history. This and other technological developments have a powerful impact on how we deal with many of the complex questions in our society.

Content:

Courses in this area should stress scientific inquiry and deal with basic or fundamental questions of science rather than applied ones. They may be formulated from traditional basic courses in such areas of study as biology, chemistry, physics, astronomy, geology or agriculture. As well, courses related to understanding the role and functions of computers (e.g., data management and information processing) and assorted computer-related technologies should be offered in a non-applied manner to provide students with an opportunity to explore the impact of these concepts and practices on their lives.

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